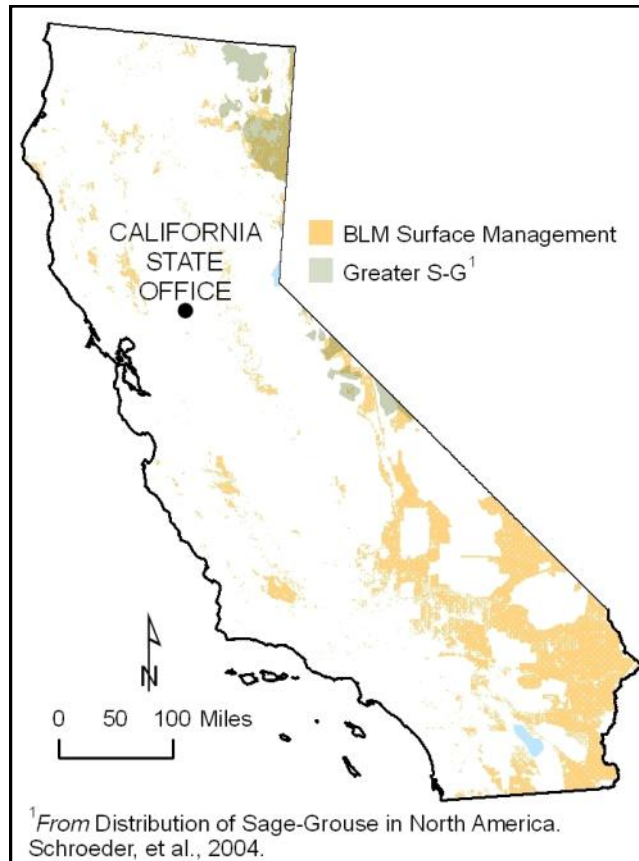


BLM-California

Sage-grouse Conservation Efforts

The BLM manages key sage-grouse habitat in Inyo and Mono counties, the Buffalo-Skedaddle area in Lassen County, and smaller areas of Modoc County. In 2008, the Alturas, Eagle Lake, and Surprise Field Offices, located in northeastern California, completed new resource management plans (RMPs) that include strong focus on sage-grouse, sagebrush, and sagebrush-related species. Each RMP fully incorporates the local stakeholder-developed sage-grouse conservation plans, and the state game agencies, along with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, have been full partners throughout the development of these RMPs. Additionally, these field offices have signed records of decision for an interagency and intergovernmental environmental impact statement (EIS) for 6.5 million acres in northwest California and northeast Nevada. This EIS comprehensively addresses sagebrush steppe ecosystem restoration on a landscape scale over a 47-year timeframe, and outlines an adaptive management approach initially treating 17,000 acres per year of juniper encroachment. The treatments benefit the entire suite of sage-dependent species, including big game, birds and small mammals, as well as yield biomass which can be used for clean, renewable energy production.



At the local level, conservation plans have been prepared under the umbrella of the Nevada governor's sage-grouse conservation strategy in cooperation with Nevada Department of Wildlife for population management units that straddle the California-Nevada border. Partnerships are in place with the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) for border populations and those lying wholly within California. These local planning efforts have utilized stakeholder planning groups to conduct extensive risk assessments for each population management unit and recommend appropriate conservation measures to address the identified risks. These conservation planning efforts have been extremely successful, primarily because of a high level of stakeholder interest and involvement.



With the plans and a strategy in place, on-the-ground sage-grouse management is proceeding at a rapid pace. Accomplishments include extensive use of radio-telemetry to define seasonal range information for all California sage-grouse populations, extensive juniper reduction projects, aspen stand restoration, and sagebrush/perennial grass restoration, particularly in areas where the cheatgrass fire cycle has eliminated critical seasonal habitats such as nesting and summer brood-rearing. Habitat conservation and restoration project work continues through grants from the DFG and Sierra Nevada Conservancy, and the efforts of such active partners as the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, California Mule Deer Association, Quail Unlimited, and many others.

In addition, the Bishop Field Office, in cooperation with The Nature Conservancy and local stakeholders, recently completed the development of a Conservation Action Plan (CAP) for the Bodie Hills. Located in the eastern Sierra region of California, the Bodie Hills provides habitat for one of the largest and best documented populations of sage-grouse in the “Bi-State Planning Area.” Sage-grouse populations in this portion of California are closely related to adjacent populations in Nevada and delineate the southwestern limit of the species range. For listing purposes, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service identified sage-grouse populations in the Bi-State Planning Area as a Distinct Population Segment. Similar to efforts in northeast California and northwest Nevada, the Bodie Hills CAP outlines sagebrush habitat conservation and restoration opportunities on a landscape scale and is expected to benefit the entire suite of sagebrush associated species, including sage-grouse.

